

Appln. No. 10/039,191
Amendment dated February 22, 2005
Reply to Office Action mailed November 19, 2004

REMARKS

Applicant's attorney is pleased to note that, at page 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner has indicated that Claims 10, 11, 18-20 are allowed and that Claims 7-9 contain allowable subject matter. By the foregoing amendments, Claim 7 has been rewritten in independent form to include all of the features recited in its base claim (i.e., independent Claim 12) and its intervening claims (i.e., dependent Claims 4-6). In drafting Claim 7, minor editorial changes have been made to the claim language in order to address the Examiner's objection to Claim 7. In the foregoing circumstances, it is respectfully submitted that amended independent Claim 7 is in condition for allowance.

With respect to Claims 8 and 9, they depend, either directly or indirectly, from amended Claim 7. In such circumstances, it is believed that Claims 8 and 9 are also in condition for allowance.

New Claim 25 has been added. Claim 25 depends from amended independent Claim 12.

The remaining pending claims have been rejected on prior art grounds. More particularly, Claims 2-5 and 12 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schaldach U.S. Patent No. 5,922,015. Claim 6 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Schaldach reference in view of Tarjan et al. U.S. Patent No. 4,475,560. These claim rejections are respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

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As an initial matter, applicant has amended independent Claim 12 in order to emphasize and clarify novel features of the present invention. More particularly, Claim 12 has been amended to include various features recited in Claim 6 and the features recited in Claim 7. Since the Office Action indicates that the features recited in Claim 7 are patentably distinguishable over the references relied upon by the Examiner in the Office Action (i.e., the Schaldach and Tarjan et al. references), applicant's attorney respectfully submits that amended Claim 12, which includes various features recited in Claim 6 and the features recited in Claim 7, recites allowable subject matter. Because Claims 2-6 and new Claim 25 depend, either directly or indirectly, from amended Claim 12, Claims 2-6 and 25 are also believed to be in condition for allowance.

The Tarjan et al. reference was only cited against dependent Claim 6. Applicant's attorney respectfully submits that the Tarjan et al. reference, whether considered individually or in combination with the Schaldach reference, does not anticipate or make obvious the present invention as recited in any of the claims submitted for examination with the entry of this Amendment.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, applicant's attorney respectfully requests reexamination and allowance of Claims 2-9 and 12, and examination and allowance of new Claim 25. If such action cannot be taken, the Examiner is cordially invited to place a telephone call to applicant's attorney in order that any outstanding issue may be resolved without the issuance of a further Office Action.

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A fee of \$200 is believed to be due to cover the one additional independent claim submitted by way of this Amendment. The Examiner is hereby authorized to charge the \$200 fee to Deposit Account No. 501402. If there are any additional fees due as a result of this Amendment, including extension and petition fees, the Examiner is authorized to charge them to Deposit Account No. 501402.

Respectfully Submitted,

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